

Romans 6: 3-11

Matthew 28: 1-10

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We have just witnessed one of the Holy and Ancient liturgies of the early church. People back in those days studied one full year and had all the psalms memorized along with Bible passages, before being able to join the church on this Easter Vigil. To be baptized required you to know a lot more about the Bible than you can imagine. The scriptures that were read this morning would be one of those that would have been memorized as they told the story of their people. Rejoice in the Lord and be glad that you are able to be members of the church without going to school for a full year.

This service is special as we begin with a fire (a new fire) in the memorial garden and then being led by the Pascal candle, the only light in this large sanctuary, we then have

everyone's candles lit so that we begin to see the light of Christ. The light that the Roman Empire thought it could keep from shining; now shines brighter than ever. After going through the traditional readings ending with our Baptism Covenant, which is the statement of what we believe. At the moment the candles were extinguished the sun light begins to shine through the resurrection window. This gives us a beautiful picture of the Risen Christ being seen by his disciples'; all except for Judas who betrayed Christ.

The angel said, "Do not be afraid, I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified". Jesus on several occasions told the disciples not to be afraid, you of so little faith. Now we know Christ is raised from the grave and our main task is to continue everyday to realize that fact. We

must be reminded each day that the power of the Holy Spirit will give us what we need to face each day.

Can't you just imagine the fear that Mary would have had when she arrived at the grave site and the stone was rolled away? The body of Jesus is gone. There had already been so much concern because our Lord was crucified and died; and now to add insult on to injury, they have stolen away his body before it could be prepared for burial. This would have had to be a very disappointing moment in life to have something like this take place. So leaving the tomb quickly as they were instructed; they came upon Jesus, and he said "Greetings". Again this is another reference when Jesus says, "Do not be afraid".

I was sitting in my office yesterday after the Saturday morning liturgy and feeling uncomfortable; feeling the dread of the day when our Lord was laying in a tomb;

allowing myself to almost have no hope. I decided to walk around for a minute and as I turned the corner around Henry Hall, I began to hear Easter music being played on the organ and trumpet. Joy was a wonderful feeling and then coming into the church and smelling the lilies gave me a new hope.

That is what this day is all about, to receive the hope and consolation that Jesus Christ is risen from the grave to forgive us of our sins. We no longer have to have a life of fear and uncertainty because we once again know that Christ rose from the grave for us. Don't you wonder sometimes; "Why do we celebrate Easter each year"?

When you take the time to think about that question you will soon know how many times it takes us human beings to grasp the total knowledge of what is going on. Every year we learn something more about the Risen Lord, and

this helps us to always know that God gave his only Son for us.

Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed.

Amen